

In the New York Manner

BY LUCIAN CARY

They Were Trying to Adjust Themselves to the Metropolis.

JOE THAYER came down 5th avenue swinging his stick as if he owned the street. It was that morning in April when spring boldly announces herself; that morning when the myriads of buds on the trees in Madison square actually burst into myriads of tiny leaves. On such a morning it occurs simultaneously to thousands of young men that New York is full of pretty girls.

Joe arrived at the offices of Shotwell & Orme just in time to see Miss Robinson disappear through the door that led to the art studio. She hadn't seen him. Joe walked into his office, frowning thoughtfully, and merely nodded to his secretary.

On his desk was a booklet, entitled "In the New York Manner." Joe picked up the booklet and read it through from cover to cover. Then he walked over to the window and looked down on Madison square.

It was six months since he had come on from Indiana to make a place for himself in the offices of Shotwell & Orme. In that six months he had succeeded—that is, he had succeeded with Shotwell & Orme. But he was exactly where he was in the first place with Miss Robinson.

Joe had never said anything to her but "Good-morning, Miss Robinson." Not even "Is it a good day?" And especially not "Where are you going to lunch?" Why hadn't he?

It was because she was so extraordinarily pretty in such a quiet, distinguished way, and because of the aid with which she carried herself, of the way she wore her clothes. She was simply dressed always. But her clothes so exactly suited her. It was because she had the New York manner.

Joe sat down at his desk and idly turned the leaves of the booklet. It had been printed to advertise the wares of a dealer in men's furnishings. It raised and answered in detail the question of how a young citizen of the metropolis ought to dress in order to say quietly but unmistakably that he belonged. It spoke of simplicity and distinction and ease.

"What is it that gives a man that assured ease, that secure self-confidence?" the booklet asked. And it proceeded to answer: "Above everything else, it is the knowledge that he is appropriately dressed for the occasion."

It distinctly implied that if you were appropriately dressed you would have assured ease, secure self-confidence. Indeed, he had intended to imply that when he had written it. He had believed it was so. When he had invented that slogan, "In the New York Manner," he had been convinced that the right clothes were a sure way to achieve the New York manner. But there seemed to be more to it than just clothes.

Suppose you were from a small city in Indiana. Suppose you knew the ways of that town backward and forward, so you were never in doubt as to what was what. Suppose you

knew exactly how to proceed from the stage of "Good-morning, Miss Robinson" to the stage of kissing her good-night just before you left her at her own front door. Suppose you could do all this quite perfectly in Indiana. What would you do in New York?

But supposing he did get up his nerve to wait for her and ask if he might walk up the steps with her and that she accepted? What would you do then? You couldn't very well walk over to step in and have a soda. That would be small-town stuff. You could ask her out to lunch. But you didn't do that kind of thing at Shotwell & Orme's. What he really wanted to do was to ask her out to dinner. But he could hardly do that right off. And, besides, what kind of a place would he ask her to? The truth was he didn't know enough about restaurants to choose. He had been so busy holding his job since he'd got down to New York that he hadn't been around. Now he recalled the story somebody had told him of the young man from the middle west who had met the perfect girl and wanted to do the perfect thing, and so he had taken her to dinner at the Pennsylvania station.

Joe considered that he might ask her to go to the theater. He could casually mention the fact that he had complimentary tickets to something, and if she expressed interest he could go and buy tickets. And if he should manage to ask her to the theater, what would he wear? His dinner jacket, of course. That reminded him of something he had written about dinner jackets in the booklet entitled "In the New York Manner." He had called especial attention to the backless white waistcoat, cut in the new short-waisted fashion. He'd have to get one himself right away. It had been designed in London—for dancing-cooler.

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HE went out at lunch time and bought the white waistcoat and had it sent home. At a quarter to 5 he put on his hat and said good-night to his secretary and went down to the lobby of the building and waited for Miss Robinson. When she came out of the elevator he followed her. When she reached the door that was beside her, he lifted his hat and said, "Why, good-afternoon, Miss Robinson." Just like that.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Thayer?" she said, and smiled.

"I hope," Joe said, "I hope you're walking up the avenue."

"Yes," she said, "I am."

He fell into step with her.

He couldn't think of exactly the right thing to say next. But he was glad he was carrying a stick and that he carried it as if he were used to carrying it.

"I heard today," Miss Robinson said, "that your booklet on men's furnishings has made a hit with the client."

"I had a lot of fun doing it," Joe said modestly.

Joe affected a slightly bored smile while he studied the room. It was, he decided, quietly exotic. The tables

were small, the lights were carefully shaded, the carpets were thick.

There was no music. At least a third of the patrons were not in evening dress. Joe wondered if the crowd at Delmonico's was any more distinguished.

The cold consommé was refreshing but not exciting. He awaited the supreme of guinea hen with interest. It proved to be cold also—it was in fact cold jellied chicken. While he ate it Joe wondered what kind of salad a habitude of such a restaurant as this would order. He considered endive, which he had always thought unnecessarily bitter. He considered watercress, which he had been to like very much. He decided in favor of the endive.

"Sir," said the waiter, "I regret to say we have no endive."

"Hmmm," said Joe, and frowned reproachfully.

"Have you—by any chance—some watercress," he asked.

The waiter bowed.

"Yes, sir."

When he had eaten the watercress, Joe ordered a demitasse but continued to study the menu. The truth was he was still hungry. But he didn't want a sweet. He considered cheese. He found cheese à la Cyrano.

"What," he asked, "is that—cheese à la Cyrano?"

"That, sir, is a specialty of the house," the waiter said. "Very good."

"Bring me some," Joe said.

The cheese was very good. It seemed to be a mixture of cheeses, made into little balls, like butter balls. He had distinction. Cyrano's would do. The check was seven dollars.

Joe reflected that there was one advantage in staying at home nights and working for six months. He had money in the bank—enough so he could easily spend some on a pair of dress trousers designed for a short waistcoat. He would order them the next day.

He got the trousers by insisting, in a week. But the moment he tried them on he perceived that they demanded a new jacket. That took another week. So it was two weeks before he waited for Miss Robinson in the lobby again.

Dressing involved unpinning the union between his waistcoat and trousers, in order to put on a dress shirt, and then repinning. In half an hour he was in a taxi. In forty minutes the waiter was suggesting a cold consommé, and Joe was accepting the suggestion.

And after that, he said, "I'd like the supreme of guinea hen Jeanne."

He had no idea what it would be like, but he intended to find out.

"Very good, sir," said the waiter, and departed.

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